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ThunderClan cats

[image]

Clan Leader

Bramblestar

Deputy

Lionblaze

Medicine Cat

Jayfeather

Warriors

Icecloud

Falcontail

Wavefur

Berrynose

Toadstep

Rosepetal

Sorreltail

Cavefrost

Lilyblossom

Grassfur

Poppyfrost

Cherrypelt

Molefur

Millie

Thornclaw

Spiderleg

Dustpelt

Brackenfur

Groundsquirrel

Floodface

Woodpelt

Mousewhisker

Ivypool

Sunsplash

Shadecloud

Cloudtail

Brightheart

Bumblestripe

Blossomfall

Cinderheart

Queens (she-cats nursing or expecting kits)

Daisy

Dovewing (nursing Bumblestripe's kits; Eaglekit, Talonkit, and Splashkit)

Lilyblossom(expecting Falcontail's kits)

Elders

Graystripe

Purdy

Prologue

[image]

PROLOGUE

A young brown tom stepped out the medicine cat den. “Shadecloud!” he yowled.

A black she-cat trotted out of the warriors den. “What is it, Woodpelt?” Shadecloud asked.

“Lilyblossom is kitting and…” Woodpelt began.

“Lilyblossom is kitting already?” Shadecloud asked.

Almost as if in answer to her question, a loud screech came from the nursery. “That can’t be good. What happens if she doesn’t…” Shadecloud meowed worriedly.

“Jayfeather wanted a raspberry leaf,” Woodpelt interrupted impatiently. “But I forgot what it looks like.”

Without any further hesitation, Shadecloud entered the medicine cat den. Scents from her old life drifted into her nose. She shook her head to clear her mind before trotting over to Jayfeather’s store of herbs.

Sorting through the piles of herbs with her right forepaw, she grabbed a leaf with a slight red tint. She dropped it onto the ground near Woodpelt. “You know it’s a raspberry leaf because it has a jagged edge,” she explained quickly.

Woodpelt nodded his thanks and turned around to leave the den. “Woodpelt, wait!” Shadecloud called.

Woodpelt turned his head. “I’m sorry, Shadecloud,” he mumbled. “I don’t have time for delays. Lilyblossom’s life is on the line.”

As he continued to pad out of the den, Shadecloud called after him, “Did Jayfeather happen to ask for borage too?”

Woodpelt stopped walking and raced back over to stand beside Shadecloud. He grabbed some borage leaves in his jaws before dashing out of the den. Shadecloud stood there for a moment, alone in the medicine cat den. Then, she took a deep breath and decided to head to the nursery to see if she could help Jayfeather. She decided that she should be helpful rather than sitting around being nostalgic.

She paused at the opening of the den, taking one last glance over her shoulder. Suddenly a chill crept up her spine and she was engulfed in a vision. Wind ruffled her fur, and stung against her eyes. She sank her claws into the ground to avoid being carried away.

Bramblestar flew over her head, nearly crashing into her. More of her Clanmates were carried away by the howling wind.

Soon, only four cats remained in the camp. Her siblings, Woodpelt and Wavefur, her mother, Blossomfall, and her father, Thornclaw were huddled together in the center of the clearing, trying not to be taken away like their Clanmates. With a wail that chilled Shadecloud’s blood, Blossomfall went flying across the clearing. She fell to the ground, unconscious. Thornclaw, Woodpelt, and Wavefur immediately rushed over to help her, forgetting that the wind would carry them away too. They were tossed into the distance by the storm and they soon disappeared. Shadecloud opened her mouth to scream in horror, but no sound came out. Suddenly, she lost her grip and she went sailing away from everything she knew.

Everything went dark and a voice whispered, “An unknown threat is near. Wind has the power to destroy our Clan.”

Chapter 1: Jayfeather

[image]

JAYFEATHER

Jayfeather paced back and forth across the nursery floor, waiting impatiently for Woodpelt's return. *Lilyblossom is kitting too early,* he thought to himself. *What if she doesn't make it?*

And there were other worries on his mind too. Firestar had appeared in a dream the night before. *Destruction is near,* the flame colored tom had said. *The forest will fall and cats will die.*

Jayfeather could only wonder which cats. And how many cats would die? All of his Clan? Or only a few cats?

The soft thud of pawsteps behind him brought him back to reality. "What took you so long, Woodpelt?" he snapped. "And did you even bring the right herbs?"

Jayfeather sensed that Woodpelt had dropped the herbs onto the ground in front of him. He sniffed the herbs. Woodpelt had brought the correct herbs. "Nice job," Jayfeather muttered to Woodpelt. "Just try to be a little bit quicker about it next time."

Jayfeather sensed that Woodpelt was hiding something. Jayfeather closed his eyes and concentrated for a moment. A scene flashed in front of him. *He forgot what a raspberry leaf is?* Jayfeather thought.

Jayfeather opened his eyes. "And don't ask Shadecloud for help next time!" he meowed.

Another loud screech from Lilyblossom reminded him of the most important task. "Go get me a large stick that she can bite down on," he meowed.

"And can you do that without asking Shadecloud for help?"

he added dryly.

Woodpelt darted off. Jayfeather placed his paws on Lilyblossom's belly and felt another powerful ripple pass through her belly. The queen already looked exhausted. How would she make it through this if she wasn't even halfway done yet?

Woodpelt returned soon with a large stick. Jayfeather placed in Lilyblossom's mouth. Falcontail peered anxiously into the nursery. "Is there anything I can do to help?" the tom asked.

"Could you get some wet moss please?" Jayfeather asked.

Falcontail scampered off immediately. Jayfeather simply waited for the kits to come. Falcontail took a while to return. Jayfeather placed the moss in the exhausted queen's mouth. "How soon will it be over?" Falcontail asked.

"She's almost done now," Jayfeather replied.

Woodpelt crouched beside Lilyblossom, murmuring words of encouragement. One final ripple passed through the Lilyblossom's body. Lilyblossom bit down on the stick, and it broke into splinters. Jayfeather closed his eyes and concentrated until he saw what Woodpelt was seeing. Two tiny kits lay on the nursery floor, still and unmoving. Lilyblossom was almost as still as them. "Are they dead?" Falcontail screeched.

Jayfeather was about to say yes when Woodpelt said, "The white she-kit is still breathing!"

"Well, then lick it!" Jayfeather shouted.

Jayfeather heard the smooth rasp of Woodpelt's tongue licking the kit's fur. Falcontail whispered sadly in Jayfeather's ear, "Is Lilyblossom dead?"

"Yes," Jayfeather whispered. "Lilyblossom is dead."

Chapter 2: Groundsquirrel

[image]

GROUNDSQUIRREL

"Help!" Shadecloud screeched from somewhere nearby.

Could any cat even hunt peacefully without having to face some sort of danger? Groundsquirrel thought as he raced towards Shadecloud's cry for help.

Shadecloud was at the base of the Sky Oak. Frostkit, Lilyblossom's only surviving kit, crouched fearfully beside her. A badger was lumbering towards them. Groundsquirrel darted forward, and, with a vicious battle cry, raked his claws across the badger's snout. The badger snorted and tried to hit Groundsquirrel with its massive paw. Groundsquirrel barely rolled out of the way on time. "Stay here," Shadecloud whispered to Frostkit.

The kit stared at Shadecloud with wide, frightened eyes and nodded. Shadecloud darted forward and launched herself into battle. Groundsquirrel raked his claws down the badger's right side. When the badger turned its head to stare at Groundsquirrel, Shadecloud raked her claws down the badger's other side.

Groundsquirrel leapt onto the badger's back and sank his claws into its pelt. He twisted his head, trying to sink his teeth into the badger's neck to kill it. And that's where things started to go wrong.

The badger flung Groundsquirrel off of its back. Groundsquirrel crashed into a tree and fell to the ground. His head throbbed and the world spun. "Groundsquirrel!" Shadecloud shouted.

Her cry echoed through his head and made his head hurt worse. They were both going to die…

Suddenly, Groundsquirrel heard Lionblaze's battle cry. He remembered that Lionblaze had been leading a patrol along the WindClan border. *At least Shadecloud will survive,* Groundsquirrel thought. *But I think that it seems that this may be my time to join StarClan.*

A wave of black flooded his vision and everything went dark.

Chapter 3: Lionblaze

[image]

LIONBLAZE

Lionblaze and his patrol charged towards the Sky Oak. Shadecloud stood at the base of the massive tree, with a terrified Frostkit crouching beside her and mewling pitifully. Groundsquirrel laid still and unmoving nearby. His head was bleeding in multiple places. A badger was approaching Shadecloud and Frostkit. Lionblaze lifted his head and let out a battle cry. His patrol darted forward and attacked the badger in unison. The badger seemed confused for a moment, not knowing which cat to attack first.

Then, the badger came to its senses and knocked Wavefur to the ground with a massive paw. Floodface swiped her claws across the badger's broad muzzle and the badger shook its head in fury. Lionblaze took advantage of the moment to sink his teeth into the badger's neck. The badger fell to the ground, and Lionblaze watched as the life faded from its eyes. For a long moment, every cat was silent. Then, Shadecloud spoke. "Thank you, Lionblaze, for saving my life," she meowed with her voice trembling. "Could you please carry Groundsquirrel back to camp? H-he was severely injured by the badger and I am not sure if he is going to make it."

Lionblaze carefully grabbed the injured warrior's neck in his jaws and began to drag him back to the camp.

As soon as they entered the camp, cats were immediately gathered around asking questions. Groundsquirrel's siblings were one of the first to approach. "What happened to him?" Grassfur wailed.

Cavefrost gave her a comforting lick on the ear. Grassfur completely ignored Cavefrost. "I said, What happened to my brother?" she repeated, tearing up clumps of grass with her claws as she waited impatiently.

“A badger attacked near the Sky Oak,” Lionblaze meowed grimly.

Just then, Shadecloud entered the camp carrying Frostkit in her jaws. As soon as she set the little kit on the ground, Frostkit immediately hurried back towards the nursery. Lionblaze rushed forwards and blocked her path. Lionblaze shoved his nose in her face and glared at her. “What in the name of StarClan were you doing out of the nursery?” Lionblaze demanded.

The young kit cowered under the ThunderClan deputy’s menacing gaze. “I was getting bored in the nursery,” she squeaked. “And I…”

“And you decided that it was okay to leave the nursery without permission from any cat and nearly get yourself killed? You must be punished for this!” Lionblaze meowed angrily.

“But I…”

“No excuses!” Lionblaze shouted.

Blossomfall stepped in between the two cats. “She’s only a kit, Lionblaze,” she reminded him.

“She still must be punished,” Lionblaze grumbled, but with less anger in his voice this time.

“Go to the nursery and stay there until Bramblestar and I decide your punishment,” Lionblaze ordered. “And you better not leave unless you really want to be punished.”

Frostkit, with her tail drooping and her head pointed straight towards the ground, walked sullenly into the nursery.

Lionblaze scrambled up onto the Highledge. “Someone carry Groundsquirrel into Jayfeather’s den,” he ordered. “I am going to speak with Bramblestar now.”

Lionblaze poked his head into Bramblestar’s den. It was empty. “Where did he go?” Lionblaze muttered to himself.

"Hunting, I think," a voice meowed from behind him.

Lionblaze spun around quickly. Floodface stood in front of him, meeting his startled gaze. "Sorry that I scared you," Floodface meowed. "But I had to come up here to tell that Bramblestar is not here at the moment. I saw him leave the camp at sunhigh. He should be back soon."

Lionblaze glanced at the horizon. The sun had almost faded beneath the horizon and the camp was bathed in a pale orange glow. "I won't wait for him," Lionblaze meowed quietly. "I led the dawn patrol this morning and I am a bit tired."

Lionblaze leaped down from the Highledge and padded into the warriors den. He settled comfortably into his mossy nest and stifled a yawn. He closed his eyes and fell asleep to the chattering of the birds and the whispering of the wind.

Chapter 4: Lionblaze

[image]

LIONBLAZE

The loud, anxious chattering woke Lionblaze up at an early time of the morning. “Does any cat know where Bramblestar is?” Grassfur asked.

Lionblaze walked up to Floodface. “You haven’t seen Bramblestar?” he inquired.

Floodface shook her head. “Not since he left camp yesterday,” she replied.

Lionblaze trotted forward and leaped onto the Highledge. “Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey join beneath the Highledge for a Clan meeting!” he yowled the formal words even though it was almost unnecessary, as majority of the Clan was already gathered in clearing below, waiting for him to speak.

“As most of you already know, Bramblestar has disappeared. Has any cat seen him since yesterday?” Lionblaze asked.

A wave of anxiety filled his chest as his only response was nervous muttering. “Dovewing,” he meowed. “Could you use your senses to search for Bramblestar?”

The Clan waited nervously while Dovewing concentrated. Lionblaze watched as her eyes flew open suddenly and they were filled with terror. Dovewing lowered her head and stared at the ground. “Where is he?” Lionblaze asked after a long moment of silence, not really wanting to know the answer.

Dovewing stared at him. Finally, after drawing a shuddering breath, she replied, “You’re not going to like the answer.”

“Tell me anyways,” Lionblaze meowed.

“ShadowClan; they-they’ve captured him,” Dovewing stammered. “And Rowanstar isn’t treating him nicely.”

Chapter 5: Bramblestar

[image]

BRAMBLESTAR

A rabbit hopped slowly forward in front of the ThunderClan leader, unaware of the cat who was stalking it. Bramblestar leapt forward with his forepaws outstretched, but the rabbit sensed him. It began to run away and Bramblestar followed it in pursuit. The ThunderClan leader began to tire, and as he stopped to let the rabbit leave, he caught the scent of ShadowClan's scent markers ahead. *I've already come this far?* he thought.

Bramblestar turned to head back to camp, when he heard a rustling in the undergrowth behind him. As he spun around, a ShadowClan patrol leapt on top of him and sent him tumbling to the ground. He tried to throw them off of him, but there were too many cats. "He might escape if we keep him alive on the way back to camp," Nightwhisker, one of the newest ShadowClan warriors, meowed.

Applefur nodded. "I still don't see why Rowanstar wants us to capture him, but I suppose you're right when you say we must kill him," she meowed.

Toadfoot meowed gruffly, "Who's the ShadowClan deputy here? Last time I checked, it was me."

Applefur rolled her eyes. "But I agree with your plans," Toadfoot meowed. "So go ahead and get it over with."

Bramblestar closed his eyes as Applefur raised her forepaw. But Toadfoot shoved her out of the way. "Let me do it," he growled.

As Toadfoot's forepaw struck his neck, Bramblestar waited for the dizzying darkness to engulf him, but all he felt was a bolt of searing agony. Through the pain, he realized the cruelty of Toadfoot's actions, as Toadfoot had not given him a quick death,

but a long, agonizing one. Bramblestar clenched his teeth and struggled to breathe. The agony was beginning to overwhelm him. He felt his body convulse in agony and he felt the warm blood running down his neck. He opened his mouth to yowl in agony, but all that came out was a small trickle of blood. He waited for the agony to end, and, after a long time that felt like forever, the darkness engulfed him and the insufferable pain faded.

Bramblestar opened his eyes in the fields of StarClan. The StarClan warriors stood in front of them, staring sadly at their paws as if they knew something they didn't want to tell. *I've already lost six of mynine lives,* Bramblestar thought.

Firestar stepped forward. "The final life of the heart of the thunder will be destroyed by the desire for pointless revenge. And then forest will destroyed by the howling wind, and cats will be taken to the stars. Blindness will be destroyed, the aged will die, and much will be lost. An unknown threat is near. Tell your Clan to face it with courage and the hearts of true warriors," the flame-colored tom meowed.

The StarClan warriors faded and Bramblestar found himself being dragged slowly into Rowanstar's den.

A/N: So what do you guys think Firestar's prophecy means?

Chapter 6: Bramblestar

[image]

BRAMBLESTAR

Rowanstar sat in front of Bramblestar, glaring at the ThunderClan leader. “You captured the ThunderClan leader? And no one was injured?” Rowanstar asked.

Toadfoot nodded. “Good job,” Rowanstar meowed. “Now go and organize the night patrols.”

Applefur cleared her throat. “Where is he going to stay?” she asked, pointing with her tail towards Bramblestar.

“He’ll stay here for now. I want you and Nightwhisker to stay here and make sure he doesn’t escape,” Rowanstar meowed. “Meanwhile, I have an announcement for the apprentices.”

“What is it?” Nightwhisker queried.

“We have a special form of entertainment planned for our apprentices tonight,” Rowanstar meowed, before leaving the den.

Bramblestar listened as Rowanstar summoned the ShadowClan cats. “Tonight, we have something special planned for our apprentices. I want all the apprentices to meet us in the training hollow at sunset. Don’t be late or else you’ll be punished,” the ShadowClan leader meowed.

Time passed slowly. After what felt like an eternity, Rowanstar re-entered the den. “Come with me,” Rowanstar ordered. “And I’m taking a patrol of warriors with me, so don’t even think about trying to escape.”

Rowanstar forced Bramblestar to follow him through ShadowClan territory. The marshy ground felt strange under Bramblestar’s paws and he struggled not to fall down on the

strange, slippery surface.

Finally, they reached a part of the forest where the ground was dry. “Where are we?” Bramblestar asked finally.

“The training hollow,” Rowanstar growled.

Slowly, the apprentices entered the training hollow. “Today, we have a wonderful activity prepared for you to help you practice your battle skills. We have a ThunderClan intruder on our territory,” he meowed, stepping off to the left to reveal Bramblestar sitting behind him.

“That’s the ThunderClan leader, isn’t it?” a young black-furred apprentice meowed.

Rowanstar nodded. “Yes, Stonepaw,” he meowed. “It’s up to you guys to kill him.”

A cream-colored she-cat spoke up. “Kill him?” she asked with uncertainty in her voice.

“Yes, Rosepaw. Are you too scared to do it?” Rowanstar sneered.

“N-no, Rowanstar,” Rosepaw stammered in reply.

Bramblestar quickly counted the number of apprentices. There were five of them in total. Bramblestar felt sick. He didn’t want to fight these innocent apprentices!

“Then, attack!” Rowanstar cried.

The apprentices hesitated for a moment before charging towards Bramblestar. Bramblestar remembered a trick Snowpelt had used against him in battle. He backed into the nearest pine tree and used his hindpaws to send himself sailing over the apprentices’ heads. He swung his paw at Stonepaw and tried to hit him on the head so that the apprentice would faint. But the apprentice tried to dodge out of the way and Bramblestar’s paw hit his neck instead. A large gash opened on his neck from Bramblestar’s claws and he fell to the ground.

Bramblestar felt sick with horror, but he couldn't stop to help the young apprentice because he would be killed if he did. The biggest apprentice dashed forward. Bramblestar sidestepped and raked his claws down the apprentice's side.

Bramblestar noticed Rosepaw wasn't doing anything. One of the other apprentices was crouched beside Stonepaw and the only other apprentice was climbing the tree behind him. The biggest apprentice charged again. Bramblestar faked like he was going to sidestep to the right and then slid to the right at the last instant. He leapt onto the apprentice's back and jumped back onto the ground. The apprentice tumbled onto the ground and Bramblestar placed one forepaw on his side. For a moment, he forgot that this cat was only an apprentice and his anger overwhelmed him. He began to claw mercilessly at the apprentice's belly. Then, shock flooded over him as he realized he was killing the young tom. He stepped back and looked around the hollow. Rosepaw was still frozen in shock, staring at Stonepaw's unmoving body. A brown-furred tom crouched beside Stonepaw, gently licking his matted black fur. The apprentice who he had just fought was lying on the ground. His breaths were ragged and his belly was oozing blood. Where was the other apprentice?

Bramblestar looked up. The tom was just leaping out of the highest branch of the tree, plummeting down towards Bramblestar. Bramblestar rolled out of the way, and the tom hit the ground with a sickening thud. Rosepaw screamed in horror.

The brown tom rose slowly to full height, puffing out his chest fur and staring angrily at Bramblestar. "Rosepaw, he killed my brother and he also killed your brother! We must kill him!" the tom shouted.

Bramblestar turned his head to stare at Rosepaw. She hadn't still hadn't moved at all. While Bramblestar was staring at her, the brown-furred tom leapt onto his back. And before he could throw the tom off, the apprentice had sunken his teeth into Bramblestar's neck. The ThunderClan leader fell to the ground, and everything turned dark.

Chapter 7: Sunsplash

[image]

SUNSPLASH

Gray clouds gathered overhead and thunder rumbled in the skies. ThunderClan was still in shock over Dovewing's announcement. Lightning flashed in the skies and the kits began to wail in the nursery. "Someone!" Frostkit whined. "Stop the loud noise!"

Suddenly, a bolt of lightning came right down into the camp. A wall of fire rose, blocking the entrance to the nursery. A scream came from the nursery. Lionblaze looked at the nursery, and then shook his head sadly, realizing that there was nothing that he could do. "Evacuate the camp, ThunderClan!"

"Why is it so hot in here?" Frostkit wailed.

As she followed Lionblaze out of the camp, Sunsplash stared at the wall of flame over her shoulder. Suddenly, an idea formed in her mind. *Heat…light…fire….*

Sunsplash turned around and dashed into the camp. "Sunsplash! What are you doing?" Lionblaze yowled loudly.

The fire had already spread to other parts of the camp. How long would it be until it killed the kits and Dovewing?

Sunsplash hesitated for a moment as she stood in front of tongues of flame, which were hungrily devouring everything in its path. Then, drawing a deep breath, and summoning every bit of her courage, she closed her eyes and dashed forward.

She opened her eyes. In the distance, she heard her father scream. All she could see was fire all around, but she was unharmed. In fact, the heat felt good and she felt energy slowly seeping back into her muscles. Secondly, she realized that she could

breathe perfectly in spite of the flames.

Feeling refreshed and prepared for the task at hand, Sunsplash dashed forward. As she stepped out of the flames, hoping that Dovewing and the kits hadn't been incinerated yet, she saw the flames had almost reached them. Dovewing and the kits had passed out from smoke inhalation. As Sunsplash grabbed Dovewing by the scruff and prepared to carry her out of the nursery, a thought entered her mind. *I may be immune to fire, but Dovewing and the kits aren't.*

She stared at the approaching wall of flame and thought, *Perhaps I have the power to control the fire?*

She closed her eyes and concentrated. When she opened them, the flames had parted, leaving a path wide enough to drag Dovewing and the kits through.

When she had brought the kits and Dovewing away from the flames and out of the camp, she noticed that Lionblaze and the Clan had left. *Of course they would leave,* Sunsplash told herself. *They had to get away from the fire.*

Sunsplash was growing weary again, and she didn't think she could carry Dovewing or the kits much further. She dragged them just a little bit further, took one last glance at the burning camp, and ran towards Lionblaze and her Clan, following their scent trails.

Chapter 8: Lionblaze

[image]

LIONBLAZE

Lionblaze was frozen in shock, unable to move his eyes away from the flames that had engulfed his daughter. *Sunsplash!* he thought sadly to himself. *What were you thinking?*

Is my life supposed to miserable? Lionblaze thought. *First Pondpaw, and now Sunsplash.*

“Lionblaze,” Shadecloud whispered quietly. “We must take the Clan away from the camp.”

Lionblaze spun around and glared at the former medicine cat. “Why should we?” Lionblaze spat. “StarClan has declared our destinies to be tragedy after tragedy again. Why don’t we just leap into the flames and put an end to this miserable nightmare?”

“You don’t mean that,” Shadecloud meowed. “You’re just grieving for your daughter.”

“But I do mean it!” Lionblaze hissed. “What’s the point of trying so hard to be a good warrior and having everything you care about taken away from you?”

“Head towards the abandoned Twoleg nest,” Shadecloud shouted to the Clan.

The cats glanced unsurely at Lionblaze, and Lionblaze realized they were waiting for his order. “Go,” he muttered almost too quietly for them to hear. “Go wherever you want to go. I don’t care anymore.”

Lionblaze watched as ThunderClan walked away following Shadecloud. All of ThunderClan except for one gray she-cat. Cinderheart stayed and stared sadly at the burning camp. She

opened her mouth to speak but Lionblaze interrupted her. “Don’t tell me everything will get better!” he hissed. “Because it won’t!”

Cinderheart sighed and stared at the gray sky. “Did you ever think that maybe Pondpaw and Sunsplash are happier in StarClan?” she meowed after a long moment of silence.

“And that’s why I should go join them,” Lionblaze muttered. “I’d be a lot happier too.”

“Lionblaze,” Cinderheart meowed. “You must go join the Clan at the abandoned Twoleg nest.”

“I want to stay close to my daughter,” Lionblaze meowed.

“Lionblaze,” Cinderheart whispered. “If you don’t come, you’ll lose me too.”

Cinderheart rose to her paws and walked away. Lionblaze watched his mate disappear into the distance. *I can’t lose her too,* Lionblaze thought.

Half-heartedly, he rose to his paws and slowly followed her, with his head down and tail drooping. “What do you have against me, StarClan?” Lionblaze wailed.

After a while, he heard a rustling noise behind him. He slowly turned his head and blinked in disbelief. A golden she-cat was approaching him. She looked up and stared at him with her blue eyes. “Sunsplash?” he called incredulously.

“I am here,” she meowed. “I left Dovewing and the kits near the Sky Oak. Why are you alone? Where is the rest of the Clan?”

Lionblaze ignored her questions. “How are you still alive?” he stammered.

“Oh, just a power over heat that I have. You know, that?” she replied.

“What in the name of StarClan are you going to tell the Clan?” Lionblaze asked.

“That I never actually stepped into the flames and that it only looked like it,” she meowed.

“And what are you going to tell them about Dovewing and the kits?” Lionblaze asked.

“That they somehow made it out of the nursery before passing out of smoke inhalation,” Sunsplash responded. “And I was able to drag them out of camp.”

Lionblaze felt a drop of water land on his nose. “The rain will probably stop the fire,” he meowed. “Let’s head back towards the camp.”

“I hope the fire didn’t reach the Sky Oak,” Sunsplash meowed.

Sunsplash and Lionblaze walked back towards the camp. They quickly reached the Sky Oak, where the unconscious bodies of Dovewing and the kits laid. They entered the camp, where the flames had been extinguished by the rain. Lionblaze silently thanked StarClan as he saw that only the nursery and warriors den had been harmed by the fire. “We can rebuild the warriors den and the nursery,” Lionblaze meowed. “I’m just glad every cat is safe. Let’s go find the rest of the Clan at the abandoned Twoleg nest.”

Lionblaze grabbed Dovewing and Frostkit by the scruff, and Sunsplash carried the other kits. Then, they began to walk towards the abandoned Twoleg nest.

Halfway through the journey, the rain stopped. Lionblaze stared at the stars that rested in the now clear night sky, and was thankful that Sunsplash hadn’t joined them. “I love you, Sunsplash,” he whispered.

“I love you too, Lionblaze,” Sunsplash replied.

Chapter 9: Bramblestar

[image]

BRAMBLESTAR

Bramblestar woke up in the medicine cat den in ShadowClan's camp. Two cats stood outside guarding the entrance, and one cat was inside of the den, probably to protect Littlecloud. The cat who was inside the den had fallen asleep. Bramblestar slowly rose to his feet and quietly crept towards the entrance to the den. He whacked one of the cats on head with a massive forepaw, watching as the cat fell unconscious and quickly did the same to the other cat, before he could warn his Clanmates that were sleeping around him.

Bramblestar's paws slid silently across the marshy ground until he was only a tail-length away from the cat who sat in the center of the camp, watching for intruders. Suddenly, for some reason, the cat turned around. Before the cat could say anything, Bramblestar raised his left forepaw and gave the cat a hard blow to the head.

Bramblestar surveyed the camp, checking to make sure no cat had seen him escape. *Finally,* Bramblestar thought. *I can return to my Clan. Thank StarClan this nightmare is over.*

Bramblestar padded towards the entrance to ShadowClan's camp. He stopped as soon as he reached the entrance and stared at the stars. *Thank you, StarClan,* he thought. *For letting me escape from here and survive this terrible experience.*

Bramblestar took a deep breath and stepped out of the camp.

As soon as he was about two steps outside of the camp, a large tom appeared in front of him, blocking his path. The cat lifted a forepaw, preparing for the death blow. "Going somewhere?" Rowanstar snarled, bringing his paw down towards Bramblestar's

neck.

Chapter 10: Shadecloud

SHADECLOUD

Shadecloud opened her eyes in the StarClan territory. There were no other cats in sight. She looked around. “Firestar!” she called. “Lionheart! Is anyone here?”

Shadecloud heard the crackling sound of thunder and stared up at the gray sky. *Stormy weather?* she thought. *In StarClan?*

A jagged bolt of lightning hit the ground right in front of Shadecloud. When the brilliant white flash of light faded, Firestar had appeared.

“What is happening? Why is the weather like this?” Shadecloud asked.

“You are seeing the future,” Firestar meowed.

“The future?” Shadecloud asked, feeling slightly confused for a moment.

Then, she suddenly recognized the trees that surrounded the hollow. *The training hollow!* “I’m in ThunderClan territory,” she murmured half to herself. Then, louder, she asked, “Is this about the unknown threat?”

Firestar nodded. “You will glimpse more of what may be your fate soon,” he meowed. “But first, I have another prophecy to give you.”

“Oh, joy,” Shadecloud muttered.

Firestar narrowed his eyes and glared at her before speaking. “Sunset will bring the fourth and final death, and the next sunrise will bring a problem that causes many deaths,” the flame-colored tom recited the words of the prophecy.

"That prophecy sounds so wonderful!" Shadecloud exclaimed sarcastically. "I just can't wait for it to come true."

Firestar shot her one last look before disappearing.

Suddenly, with almost no notice at all, an amazingly powerful gust of wind swept her off her feet and carried her upwards. She was spinning in circles, but still rising higher and higher up into the air. She felt as the wind would tear her apart and kill her when suddenly….

Shadecloud opened her eyes in the warriors den just as pale sunlight was beginning to creep into the camp.

A/N: When it says that Shadecloud is in the warriors den, it is only a temporary warriors den until the real one is fixed, as the real one was damaged by the fire.

Chapter 11: Bramblestar

A/N: I'd just like to apologize for the sluggish updates recently. I've just been really busy with school work. (20 cheers for Winter Break!) So, yeah, I decided to give everyone a nice long chapter and i just wanted to say thanks for your patience and for reading/voting/commenting! :D

BRAMBLESTAR

Bramblestar opened his eyes in Rowanstar's den. No ShadowClan cats were in there, which seemed surprising to Bramblestar. He paws ached for some reason, and he wondered what ShadowClan had done to him while he was recovering from losing his eighth life. A sudden realization hit him. *My eighth life… this is my last life.*

Rowanstar still hadn't noticed that he was awake yet. *Maybe I can make it out of the den and leave the camp without being noticed*, Bramblestar thought.

Bramblestar tried to rise to his feet, but something pulled him back onto the ground. He stared at his feet. Vines had been wrapped tightly around each of his forepaws and the other ends of the vines had large rocks placed on top of them. Rowanstar noticed, but hardly even looked up. "Noticing the bonds, are you?" the ShadowClan leader asked.

"Do you have me chained up so that you can kill me easily whenever you feel like it?" Bramblestar snarled.

Rowanstar snorted. "Of course not! We only have to kill you when you try to escape, or when we first capture you, of course."

"Well, what was the apprentice's 'special activity' for then?" Bramblestar demanded.

"Good training for the apprentices," Rowanstar replied.

“Their combat skills are weak! Six of them combined almost couldn’t defeat you. If you ask me, they need more battle training. If it wasn’t for Mudpaw…“

Bramblestar hated how nonchalantly Rowanstar referred to his capture, or the three lives he had lost.

“The brown tom who killed me?” Bramblestar asked, interrupting the ShadowClan leader.

“Yeah,” Rowanstar answered.

Bramblestar tried to rise again. The vines held him back again. “How are these possibly strong enough to restrain me?” he asked, not really expecting an answer.

“Vines, as long as they’re not too thin, are very strong. Perfect for keeping prisoners from escaping. The vines won’t break, so all you have to do is put a rock on the other end to keep them from moving, and there you have it,” Rowanstar responded.

“Why are you telling me this? If ThunderClan knows this, wouldn’t it be harmful to ShadowClan? We could capture some of your warriors and keep them as hostages,” Bramblestar meowed.

“But ThunderClan won’t know this, because you won’t make it out of here. And if you try to escape, you’ll die. You only have so many lives, so it’s only a matter of time before you lose your final life,” Rowanstar replied.

Bramblestar was relieved that Rowanstar didn’t know he was on his final life, but he was also concerned. What if Rowanstar killed him, assuming that he had more than one life remaining?

“I won’t need to escape,” Bramblestar responded, trying to sound confident. “My Clan will rescue me.”

“Yes, they’ll try,” Rowanstar agreed. “But we’ve already set the traps. They won’t make it far past the border.”

Traps? “Um…what traps?” Bramblestar asked nervously.

“You know about the tunnels of course, don’t you?” Rowanstar asked.

Bramblestar nodded. “Ok then, try to listen to me as I explain. It may be too complicated for your tiny ThunderClan brain, but try to understand some of it okay?” Bramblestar was hardly able to keep himself from snarling in reply. “Well, there’s a main path that leads to camp that’s easier to take than any other way. Less obstacles such as thorn bushes and whatnot. But anyhow, that is the path that your Clan is more than likely going to take to head towards camp. And about the tunnels, well, I guess you didn’t know that ShadowClan knew about these tunnels before you and WindClan did.”

Rowanstar paused for a moment. “So there was a tunnel at one point in the path. The opening was pretty wide, definitely too wide for a cat to jump across. It led straight down. It was very steep. You could easily drop down without getting hurt, but once you were down there, you couldn’t leap back up. It didn’t matter though, because the tunnel headed towards the camp. The exit was very close to the camp entrance, and you could climb back up easily. But, we decided that it was too dangerous to have other Clans be able to come that close to camp unnoticed. We placed vines- as you already know, they’re very strong, even strong enough to support a cat- across the opening before…”

“Wouldn’t the vines move when a cat walks across it?” Bramblestar interrupted.

“Well, we’re not that mouse-brained, ThunderClan fool,” Rowanstar replied. “We placed rocks on top of the vines on both sides at the edges of the opening, you know, the same idea as placing rocks on top of the vines in here. We then covered the vines with leaves. But now, we’ve removed the rocks from on top of the vines, which means, when your Clan walks across it-“

“They’re going to fall into the tunnels,” Bramblestar finished Rowanstar’s sentence for him, feeling dread rise in his chest. “But don’t the tunnels lead to camp?”

“Well, of course they do! That’s why the tunnel that leads

towards camp is blocked with thorn bushes, and the tunnel leading in the other direction, back towards ThunderClan territory, is also blocked. When one of our border patrols find your Clanmates trapped in the tunnels, they'll tell me and I'll send warriors to lift them one at a time out of the tunnel, take that cat back to camp, and get another cat. We'll force them to either hunt, fight, and do all apprentice duties for us or die. They'll have two pieces of prey to share among all of them once per day, and if a few of them die of starvation, oh well. Maybe it'll remind them of what you did to us, not letting us take any of your plentiful prey when we were nearly starving to death and how you nearly wiped out our whole entire Clan and then, killed our leader," Rowanstar said. "Huh? I didn't nearly wipe out your whole Clan, and I wasn't the one who killed Blackstar. One of my warriors did. So why do you hate ThunderClan so much?" Bramblestar asked.

Rowanstar's eyes narrowed. "We were starving due to that black liquid! But you couldn't let us take a little bit of prey! No! After the battle that killed Blackstar, all of our elders died of starvation and two warriors died too! You could've shared a little bit of prey! You could've helped us! You could've stopped those elders and warriors from dying but you were too selfish! You could've-"

"Asked before you stole our prey and broke the warrior code, and then maybe we would've let you hunt for a little while on our territory," Bramblestar snarled.

Rowanstar was about to reply when Redpaw suddenly rushed into the den. "It's Littlecloud," she panted, not even looking at Bramblestar. "He received a prophecy from StarClan and he wants to talk to you right away."

"What did the prophecy say?" Rowanstar asked.

"Many of the shadows will be destroyed by fire and wind," Redpaw replied.

Bramblestar could tell Rowanstar was trying to keep the fear out of his eyes. "Many of the shadows? Does that mean ShadowClan's warriors?" Rowanstar asked.

A thought was forming in Bramblestar's head. *Could fire have something to do with Firestar's kin, or maybe even his Clan? Could it mean ThunderClan?*

"Littlecloud thinks so. He wants to see you in his den now, and discuss some precautions we could take to avoid any, um, incidents," Redpaw responded.

Rowanstar nodded quickly and rushed out of the den.

Redpaw crept behind him. Bramblestar turned his head and watched as she managed to push the rock off of the vines. "Why are you helping me? Was that prophecy fake?" Bramblestar asked as he rose to his feet.

"No, the prophecy is real. But Littlecloud said to free you after I told Rowanstar the prophecy and got him to leave the den. He says that Rowanstar's so-called revenge is pointless. He says that Blackstar brought his death upon himself when he decided to break the warrior code. ShadowClan shouldn't keep innocent prisoners," Redpaw replied.

"Well, then, thank you," he meowed.

The red-furred she-cat nodded and rushed out of the den.

Only a few moments later, Bramblestar had exited the den. No cat was outside in the clearing. It looked like he might actually escape.

Bramblestar was only halfway across the clearing when he heard the sound of rushing pawsteps. *ThunderClan?* he thought hopefully.

But it only sounded like one cat alone, not like a whole Clan of cats. *Please, don't let it be a ShadowClan warrior coming back from hunting or something,* Bramblestar silently begged StarClan.

Bramblestar watched as a cat dashed into the camp. The weirdest thing was that the cat was literally on fire, but none of the ground around it was harmed.

What in the name of StarClan is going on?

Chapter 12: Lionblaze

LIONBLAZE

Lionblaze stood on the Highledge, gazing down at the camp. “Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey join beneath the Highledge for a Clan meeting!” he yowled loudly.

The clearing was quickly filled with cats. “As most of you already know, Bramblestar has been captured by ShadowClan,” Lionblaze meowed. “Well, we’re not just going to stand by and let ShadowClan injure and potentially kill our leader. At sunset today, we will have our revenge. One final time, we will show ShadowClan who is more powerful.”

“Here’s who will come to ShadowClan’s camp to rescue Bramblestar: Shadecloud, Grassfur, Cavefrost, Thornclaw, Sunsplash, Ivypool, Blossomfall, Wavefur, Falcontail, Floodface, Icecloud, Berrynose, Toadstep, Rosepetal, Sorreltail, Poppyfrost, Cherrypelt, Molefur, Millie, Spiderleg, Mousewhisker, Bumblestripe, and Cinderheart,” Lionblaze said.

“What about me?” Brackenfur asked, narrowing his eyes.

“And me!” Dustpelt exclaimed.

“Yeah, Lionblaze, what about Brightheart and I?” Cloudtail asked, his blue eyes glinting in the sunlight.

You’re too old to fight, so I’m leaving you behind for your own safety, Lionblaze thought. Out loud, he replied, “We need a few strong warriors to stay behind and defend the kits.”

With a sigh, he leapt down from the Highledge and walked into the warriors den. He settled comfortably into his nest and fell asleep.

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Lionblaze was standing just outside of the ShadowClan camp. One cat stood in the center of the camp. A group of cats that was as large as a whole entire Clan surrounded it. A voice that sent a chill up Lionblaze's back whispered, *Soon. The battle that will be fought alone is near.*

Lionblaze looked around, but there were no other cats there. Suddenly, the sky turned black. The moon appeared, resting in the night sky and casting a faint white glow on the camp. Near the entrance to the camp lay the unmoving body of a warrior. Lionblaze tried to see which cat it was, but he couldn't tell. Suddenly, the dream began to fade, cats and trees turning transparent. The voice whispered, *The fourth and final death is coming.*

***

It was nearly sunset as Lionblaze led the selected warriors out of the camp. They ran quickly through the forest and soon arrived at the ShadowClan border. Lionblaze hoped that they didn't run into a border patrol, because a border patrol might return to the ShadowClan camp and warn Rowanstar, spoiling the element of surprise.

But they didn't run into anything. Things were going smoothly, almost *too* smoothly for Lionblaze to believe. He wondered if they were running into a trap or something…

That's when the ground fell out from underneath Lionblaze's feet and he and his Clan plummeted into darkness.

Chapter 13: Lionblaze

LIONBLAZE

It wasn't a soft landing.

For a moment, the world spun and everything looked fuzzy. "Lionblaze!" Cinderheart yowled. "Are you okay?"

Lionblaze blinked once and he could see clearly again. He rose slowly to his feet and looked around. No one seemed to be hurt, other than a few small cuts. "Where are we?" Lionblaze groaned.

"Blocked tunnel, I think," Shadecloud meowed from behind him. "Look to your right, and then to your left. It looks like passageways that have been deliberately blocked by ShadowClan."

"So this is the trap," Lionblaze meowed. "I guess ShadowClan is going to keep us here as prisoners."

Sunsplash walked towards him. "We will never be ShadowClan's prisoners!" she hissed.

Lionblaze shook his head. "We can't do anything about it. We walked right into their trap," he meowed.

Sunsplash stared at him, a fiery determination burning in her sky blue eyes. "I'll be back to rescue you," she meowed calmly. "If the whole tunnel collapses, though, well, I really didn't mean to."

"Huh? Sunsplash, what in the name of StarClan are you talking about?" Lionblaze asked confusedly.

But Sunsplash wasn't listening. She lifted a paw and a miniature ball of flame formed in front of her. Only Lionblaze had noticed, because the other ThunderClan cats were too busy worriedly conversing among each other. Sunsplash closed her eyes

and the tiny circle of fire soared towards the thorn barrier on one side. It exploded it an orange burst of light. Sunsplash dashed forwards as the ceiling trembled and rocks began to rain down from the ceiling as the opening to that passageway started to collapse. Sunsplash darted right through the wall of flames.

Lionblaze stared as more rocks fell from the roof. The rocks would extinguish the flames, but they would also block the tunnel again. Lionblaze realized that it was too late to run after his daughter. *How am I going to find her now? It's impossible!* Lionblaze thought in despair.

Suddenly, he heard Bramblestar's voice is his ear, whispering softly. *There is always a solution to every problem, and an answer to every question. There is always a way. Nothing is truly impossible.*

Lionblaze blinked. Bramblestar had spoken those words to him a long time ago, back when he was Brambleclaw, the deputy of ThunderClan.

Lionblaze looked up at the opening they'd fallen through. There was no way for a cat to climb back up. *But maybe….just maybe….*

Lionblaze took a massive leap and somehow managed to keep himself from sliding back down into the cave. Soon, Lionblaze was pulling himself up onto safe ground above. He didn't know quite how he'd made it up there. Thinking of Sunsplash had given him enough strength to climb up and escape.

His Clan was watching him, staring in amazement. He looked down at the innocent warriors who had been trapped by the ShadowClan, and he felt anger and hatred start to rise up in his chest. *I must rescue Bramblestar and Sunsplash…but I have to help my Clan too. But Sunsplash will probably die if I don't somehow save her from ShadowClan quickly.* "I'll be back!" he shouted to his Clan as he ran off towards the ShadowClan camp.

Chapter 14: Sunsplash

SUNSPLASH

The wall of thorns blocking the tunnel exploded in a flash of orange light. Sunsplash looked up and saw a few small cracks appearing in the roof of the tunnel and starting to widen. Rocks began to fall from the ceiling and Sunsplash knew that the tunnel would soon be blocked again, except this time, for good. She rushed forward without thinking and dashed into the wall of flames. As she emerged on the other side of the flames, a small rock caught her on the shoulder and sent her cascading onto the ground. Rocks continued to rain from the ceiling and Sunsplash knew that unless she moved out of the way quickly, she would be buried under a massive pile of stones. She forced herself to rise to her feet and she managed to run despite the minor injury to her leg. It seemed like forever, but it probably wasn't long before she realized she had reached the other side of the tunnel.

The tunnel led upward, but no sunlight poured into the passageway. Sunsplash looked up and saw a lot of vines that were placed closely together and were blocking the exit. She easily pushed her way through the vine barrier, and it almost felt like they weren't even there at all. She continued to trot onwards towards the ShadowClan camp. She realized just how close the exit to the tunnel was to the ShadowClan camp. The entrance to the camp was visible from the moment she emerged from the tunnel.

She dashed into the ShadowClan camp to see Bramblestar standing a few tail-lengths away, staring at her as if she had suddenly grown a third eye. "C'mon, Bramblestar, let's get out of here!" Sunsplash hissed to the ThunderClan leader.

Instead of stepping forward and following her, Bramblestar stepped backwards. "Who are you?" he growled, unsheathing his claws and still giving her a strange look.

"Bramblestar, how do you not know who I am?" she asked.

“Wait, are you Firestar?” Bramblestar asked.

“Firestar?” Sunsplash asked.

Wait, Fire*star, maybe…*

Sunsplash looked at her paws and sure enough, they were on fire. *Of course, when I ran through the wall of fire, I was in too much of a hurry trying to make it out of the tunnel to think about extinguishing the flames on my fur,* she thought.

Sunsplash closed her eyes for a moment and the flames disappeared. “Sunsplash?” Bramblestar asked incredulously. “Where is the rest of ThunderClan and were you really on fire or was it a sign from StarClan?”

“The rest of ThunderClan is trapped in some tunnels,” Sunsplash began. “And about the fire question…”

Sunsplash didn’t finish her sentence because at that moment, a brown tom shoved Bramblestar forwards and had him pinned to the ground. “Leaving again, are you, Bramblestar?” Rowanstar sneered.

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Sunsplash leapt at Rowanstar and knocked him off of the ThunderClan leader. Rowanstar swiped his claws across her right cheek and threw her off of him. “It’s such a shame to take such a nice young apprentice as a prisoner!” Rowanstar mocked her.

“I am not an apprentice!” Sunsplash snarled in reply. “I am a warrior!”

Sunsplash closed her eyes and concentrated again. Flames appeared on her right paw and she rose to her feet. She darted and swung her paw at Rowanstar. His fur caught fire and, his teeth clenched in pain, Rowanstar fell backwards onto the ground.

Most of the ShadowClan warriors had already walked out of the warriors den to see what the commotion was all about. Sunsplash didn’t want any more warriors to come out of the den

and probably join the fight, and she also wanted revenge for what ShadowClan had done to Bramblestar. “You’re not getting any more reinforcements,” she growled, summoning a large ball of fire.

She turned her head and sent the ball of fire sailing towards the warriors den. ShadowClan cats dived for safety as the warriors den exploded and small pieces of rock went flying in every direction.

Chapter 15: Lionblaze

LIONBLAZE

Lionblaze was gasping for breath by the time he reached the entrance to the ShadowClan camp. He looked into the camp and saw Rowanstar lying on the ground with a large patch of fur missing on his right side. Sunsplash stood in the middle of the camp staring in a certain direction. Lionblaze followed her gaze as a flash of orange light lit up his world. It was gone after hardly a moment had passed. Where the warriors den had been was a large crater with black sand; no, not black sand, it was soot. Smoke rose from the crater and rocks and other pieces of debris were still flying through the air.

Sunsplash stumbled forward and Lionblaze knew that she was too tired to summon any more fire.

Out of the corner of his eye, Lionblaze saw Rowanstar rising to his feet. “Toadfoot! No!” Rowanstar screeched. “First you killed my leader and now you’ve killed my deputy!”

Bramblestar stood in the middle of the camp, frozen in shock. “Come on, Bramblestar! You need to leave!” Lionblaze hissed as quietly possible.

Unfortunately, it attracted Rowanstar’s attention. His head swiveled around and his eyes narrowed even more when he saw Lionblaze. “I’ve noticed that ThunderClan fights with fire and words instead of claws now. Have you grown so weak that you rely on unnatural powers instead of strength, weaklings?” Rowanstar growled coldly.

Without warning, Rowanstar launched himself at Bramblestar, and quickly sliced his claws across the ThunderClan leader’s neck. “Lionblaze…” Bramblestar choked out. “Last life…..”

His LAST LIFE? Lionblaze thought in shock.

His eyes clouded and closed for the final time, and the ThunderClan leader lay unmoving and still. But Lionblaze wasn't given any time to register the death of his leader. "And now, you puny she-cat, say good-bye!" Rowanstar snarled.

A shaft of starlight suddenly appeared next to Sunsplash. A young starry black-furred she-cat descended from the sky and stood next to Pondpaw. "You will not lay one paw on my sister," she hissed.

"Pondpaw!" Sunsplash exclaimed.

"Well, Rowanstar, it seems like you're going to be the one who has to say good-bye for a little while," Pondpaw said confidently.

"Just because you're a StarClan cat doesn't mean I can't kill you if you're siding with the wrong side," Rowanstar growled.

"And who are you to defy the will of StarClan?" Pondpaw replied coldly, meeting his gaze. "Last time I checked, every cat agreed that the one on the wrong side is you. Wait, every cat except for you, mouse-brain!"

"Mouse-brain yourself!" Rowanstar snarled, rushing towards Sunsplash and Pondpaw.

A wall of water burst up from the ground, blocking Rowanstar's path. Rowanstar skidded to a halt, looking frustrated. Pondpaw raised a forepaw and shoved it towards the ShadowClan leader. The water moved towards Rowanstar and lifted him high into the air. Pondpaw quickly dropped her paw back onto the ground and the water immediately dropped back down and sank back into the ground again. Rowanstar fell from the sky as the water disappeared, unable to control his fall. He landed hard on the ground, sending a cloud of dust up into the air. When he was visible again, his breathing had stopped and his neck was twisted at an awkward angle.

Up until this point, the ShadowClan warriors had just been watching, obviously expecting their leader to win this battle. But

now as they saw him lying unmoving on the ground, having lost a life, they angrily narrowed their eyes and began to slowly surround Pondpaw and Sunsplash. Pondpaw arched her back threateningly and hissed, but Lionblaze knew she couldn't take on a whole Clan of warriors.

Suddenly, a brown tom dashed into the circle to stand in front of the two sisters and turned to face his Clan. "Don't attack these two cats," the tom hissed, blinking his light blue eyes. "Innocent cats don't deserve to be killed."

"They're far from innocent, Littlecloud!" a brown apprentice hissed. "Their leader killed my brother, and they killed Rowanstar!"

"Bramblestar killed your brother because Rowanstar forced him to fight," the ShadowClan medicine cat replied. "Your brother would still be alive if it wasn't for this pitiful excuse for a leader. And these she-cats only came here to rescue their leader, who should've never been captured in the first place. Rowanstar lost a life due to his own foolishness, the same as Blackstar did. Did any cat really think that anything good would come out of breaking the warrior code which was created by StarClan? From stealing prey, capturing leaders, and ignoring the will of StarClan? Let these cats leave, so that there may be peace between our Clans. May we forget the pointless hatred that has lasted for too many moons."

A few cats continued to block their path, but most of the cats moved to one side to create a path for Sunsplash and Pondpaw to walk through.

Littlecloud turned his head to face Lionblaze. "I'm sorry for what Rowanstar did to your leader. I hope you lead your Clan well, Lionstar," Littlecloud meowed.

Lionstar held his gaze for a tense moment. Then he dipped his head and replied, "Hunt in peace for many moons, Littlecloud."

The three cats left the camp and walked forwards in silence. Finally, Pondpaw spoke. "I'll summon some water to help lift your cats out of the ShadowClan trap, but after that I must leave," the StarClan apprentice meowed.

“Pondpaw?” Lionstar meowed. “When you were still, um, alive, you thought that I didn’t love you. And I want you to know that that’s not true.”

Pondpaw returned his stare. “I know,” she meowed. “I know.”

Chapter 16: Lionstar

LIONSTAR

The three cats journeyed slowly away from the ShadowClan camp. Sunsplash stumbled forward exhaustedly, growing slower and weaker the farther they journeyed from camp. Soon, she was leaning heavily on Pondpaw, who was struggling to support her weight. Lionstar offered to stop and rest, but Sunsplash shook her head and stubbornly kept walking. “We can’t afford to stop. The Clan could be in danger,” she insisted.

To be honest, Lionstar could use a quick break for himself, but, seeing the fiery determination in her sky blue eyes gave him new strength. *She’s right,* he told himself. *The Clan could be hurt, or a ShadowClan border patrol could be threatening them or maybe even injuring them, by dropping stones on their heads or something!*

The moon had risen almost halfway up into the night sky when the cave the Clan had fallen into was in sight. Pondpaw tensed her muscles and was about to rush forward to look at the Clan when another starry cat descended from the sky above. The cat’s emerald green eyes sparkled and his flame-colored fur glistened in the sun. “Firestar?” Lionstar asked uncertainly.

The flame-colored tom turned his head towards Lionstar only long enough to give him a quick nod before turning back to face Pondpaw. “I told you not to interfere!” Firestar hissed. “The Clans are supposed to fight their own battles, not look to the sky for interference from StarClan!”

Pondpaw managed to return his gaze steadily. “Were we supposed to let Rowanstar destroy ThunderClan just because Blackstar decided to steal prey from them?” she demanded. “And StarClan interfered in the battle with the Dark Forest!”

“That was different!” Firestar growled. “Return to StarClan with me now, or you’ll suffer the consequences!”

For a moment, Pondpaw hesitated and Lionstar was certain that she was going to argue. Then, she sighed and reluctantly dipped her head. “Good-bye, Sunsplash,” Lionstar’s daughter meowed. “Good-bye, Lionstar. May StarClan light your path!”

With those words, the two StarClan cats faded.

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It was sunhigh the next day by the time the whole Clan had been lifted out of the trap. Lionstar had dropped one end of a vine into the cave and held the other end in his mouth. The cats down below would grab the vine in their mouths and Lionstar would pull them up. It was slow and difficult work, but now, the Clan had finally escaped.

Lionstar’s muscles ached, but Sunsplash couldn’t walk, so Lionstar let her lean on him. Every cat walked at a slow pace, as they were all exhausted from the ordeal.

The sun was setting by the time they reached the camp. Sunsplash staggered forwards and collapsed in the warriors den. The others stood in the clearing and waited for orders.

Finally, Cloudtail spoke up. “Why didn’t Bramblestar lead us back?” the white tom asked. “Did he go on ahead back to camp? Is he resting in his den?”

Murmurs spread rapidly through the Clan. In the midst of the chaos, Lionstar had almost forgotten about his leader’s death. Drawing a shaky breath, he spoke. “Bramblestar is dead.”

Chapter 17: Shadecloud

SHADECLOUD

Jayfeather walked over towards her and the young warrior looked away, up towards the stormy sky, where strange gray clouds with a slight greenish tint gathered. Shadecloud could hardly resist the urge to run to another part of the camp, or tag onto the back of the dawn patrol. Was now the time that Jayfeather would yell at her, tell her how stupid her decision to become a warrior was?

But Jayfeather seemed calm. “Shadecloud, I’m not angry at you, for StarClan’s sake!” he meowed, sounding exasperated. “I myself didn’t want to be a medicine cat and never truly have!”

“But, but I did,” Shadecloud whispered softly. “I left because…I mean, never mind!”

Jayfeather’s blind blue eyes stared intensely at her. “I already know you love Groundsquirrel, you don’t have to hide it!” he exclaimed.

Shadecloud’s green eyes darted around the camp. Fortunately for her, no cat had overheard. “Not so loud!” she insisted. “Why did you come to see me?”

Jayfeather glanced over at Bramblestar’s…no, Lionstar’s den. “Could you wake Lionstar for me?” the medicine cat meowed.

Shadecloud felt confusion. “Why?” she asked. “It was a tiring day yesterday. It wouldn’t be such a bad thing to let him sleep.”

“Shadecloud, Bramblestar is dead,” Jayfeather explained. “Lionstar needs to journey to the Moonpool and receive his nine lives from StarClan.”

Shadecloud felt stupid. “Oh, yes, of course he does,” she

stammered. “And yes, I’ll do it.”

Jayfeather nodded. “Good,” he meowed. “Thank you, Shadecloud! Tell him to come find me in my den!”

Her former mentor turned to leave. Shadecloud approached the Highledge and climbed up to the leader’s cave. “Lionstar!” she called as she entered the den.

There was a groan as Lionstar raised his massive golden head. “What is it, Shadecloud?” the new leader asked tiredly.

“Jayfeather told me to notify you that it is time for you to travel up to the Moonpool and meet StarClan so that you may receive your nine lives of a leader,” Shadecloud explained quickly.

Lionstar sat up groggily. “Fine,” he muttered, still looking sleepy. “Where does he want me to meet him? At the Moonpool?”

Shadecloud shook her head. “No,” she replied. “He says to meet him in the medicine cat den.”

The new leader of ThunderClan rose to his paws and walked towards the exit. “Okay, Shadecloud. Thank you for coming to tell me!” he shouted as he swiftly descended from his new den.

“No problem,” she responded, following him.

She nearly crashed into the large golden tom as he halted abruptly in front of the Highledge. “What is it?” Shadecloud demanded, sounding and feeling slightly irritated.

“Look over there, towards ShadowClan territory,” Lionstar meowed, pointing with his tail.

Shadecloud followed his gaze. In the distance, above the ShadowClan treetops, a spinning gray tunnel moved towards ThunderClan territory. She listened closely and heard a faint high-pitched screeching sound that probably would be very loud if she was closer.

Lionstar was still staring at it. “What is that?” he asked, not

looking away even to talk to Shadecloud. “A giant spinning tunnel of dust?”

Shadecloud suddenly realized what it was and backed away, trembling with fear. “Not dust,” she whispered, struggling to hold back her panic. “Wind. Howling wind.”

Lionstar must’ve heard the terror in her voice. “Shadecloud, what is that?” he glanced back at her. “Don’t lie. I know you know what it is.”

She was frightened and worried for the fate of her Clan, and the last of her courage was seemingly gone. She took a deep breath. “Lionstar, it’s the Unknown Threat.”

Chapter 18: Lionstar

LIONSTAR

Lionstar had no idea what the “Unknown Threat” was, but it most certainly wasn’t anything good. The panic in Shadecloud’s bright green eyes was obvious and extremely difficult to miss.

The former medicine cat ran around the camp, shouting as loud as she could, “Evacuate the camp! Use the secret entrance and head for the Moonpool!”

The first two cats to emerge from the warriors den were Molefur and Cloudtail. Shadecloud rushed up to them and stopped them. “Can you two please help Groundsquirrel?” she asked the two warriors. “He’s still injured from the badger attack, and I don’t want him falling off of that cliff!”

The two warriors nodded and rushed over to the medicine cats den. Lionstar hoped Groundsquirrel would be able to make the climb in his wounded condition and also hoped that Shadecloud wasn’t waking every cat for no reason at all. Graystripe came padding slowly out of the elders den, yawning, with Purdy following close behind. “Why in the name of StarClan should you choose to wake me up at this time of morning…” the gray-furred elder began.

“Evacuate camp! Secret entrance! No time to talk! Hurry!” Shadecloud yelled as she rushed over in the direction of nursery, checking to make sure Dovewing and the kits had left.

When Shadecloud returned, Purdy stepped forward. “You listen to me, young ‘un,” the annoying old cat spoke. “I ain’t goin’ nowhere ‘cause I ain’t in no condition to go on no more journeys!”

Lionstar stepped forward. “Purdy, we’re not leaving any cat behind!” the ThunderClan leader insisted.

“Well, you ain’t gonna be able to force me and Graystripe here to go,” Purdy beckoned to Graystripe with his tail and the two elders went back into the den.

“Purdy!” Lionstar was getting seriously irritated. “We can’t leave you here alone to face the ‘Unknown Threat!’”

Purdy spoke from inside the den. “If it’s an UNKNOWN threat, and it’s really unknown, how do ya even know it ain’t not a threat at all?” the elder snorted.

“We still can’t leave you alone in the camp with no younger cats or anything!” Lionstar shouted.

“We don’t need nothin’!” Purdy responded.

Lionstar opened his mouth to speak again. But a voice from behind him spoke first. “I’ll stay with them,” Lionstar’s brother meowed.

Lionstar was horrified. “Jayfeather, you’ll die!” he tried to dissuade his brother.

“In StarClan, I’ll be able to see. I’ll be a warrior at last…” Jayfeather trailed off, staring wistfully into the distance.

“Jayfeather, are you sure?” Lionstar asked, knowing there was no way to talk his brother out of it.

Jayfeather nodded. “No one will miss the useless blind medicine cat anyways!” he sighed.

“Jayfeather, that’s not true!” Lionstar insisted.

Jayfeather didn’t reply. He turned and padded slowly into the elders den.

Lionblaze stared at the entrance to the den for a long time until Shadecloud whispered, “Lionstar. Lionstar! We have to leave!”

Lionstar turned and fled towards the secret entrance to the camp. Shadecloud tried to say something, but it was lost in the

screaming of the wind-tunnel, which appeared to be in ThunderClan's territory now.

Lionstar scrambled up the cliff wall as quickly as he could, begging to StarClan that he wouldn't lose his grip, tumble back into the camp, and kill himself.

He and Shadecloud were running as fast as they could, the trees becoming a blur around them. The roar of the wind was deafening, and it was impossible to hear anything but it.

Lionstar crashed into a giant oak tree and fell to the ground, panting heavily. He closed his eyes and waited for death to find him. *I'm sorry StarClan…*

A few long heartbeats later, the noise began to fade and Lionstar hesitantly opened his eyes. A little ways in front of him, great, mighty trees were snapped in half, uprooted and moved a good distance, or knocked onto the ground.

Just as quickly as it had come, the Unknown Threat was gone.

Chapter 19: Shadecloud

SHADECLOUD

Shadecloud stared at the horizon, where the wind-tunnel was disappearing. Lionstar rose unsteadily to his paws next to her. “I must go find the Clan and then journey onto the Moonpool with Woodpelt,” the ThunderClan leader meowed. “Return to the camp. Your Clanmates will join you shortly.”

Shadecloud nodded. Lionstar turned to walk away and Shadecloud watched as the golden-furred tom began to fade into the distance. Suddenly, he turned around. “Shadecloud? Find Jayfeather for me, okay?” his voice quivered slightly when he spoke.

“Yes, I will!” she shouted, even though she had no hope of her former mentor being alive.

She padded through the ruined forest, leaping over fallen trees, tree branches, and other debris. She finally reached the camp entrance, and when she stepped inside, she couldn’t help but gasp in shock. The entire camp was littered with wreckage from the storm. The elders den had been buried under a large chunk of stone, and a large tree branch had ruined part of the warriors den.

Shadecloud scurried across the camp towards the elders den, completely certain that Jayfeather and the elders were dead. No cat, probably not even Lionstar, could survive being crushed under an object of that size.

Her assumptions were correct. An unmoving gray tail, barely visible, stuck out from under the great chunk of rock.

Shadecloud stared at the ground for a long time, wondering what to do. Sudden pawsteps alerted her of the return of her Clanmates. “Shadecloud!” Thornclaw shouted as soon as he saw his daughter. “Are you okay?”

"Yes, but Jayfeather and the elders aren't!" she replied.

Most of the warriors rushed over. "What happened?" Groundsquirrel asked.

"He...I mean they got buried and I don't think they're still alive," Shadecloud trailed off, lost in thought.

"Is it your wish to enter the mysteries of StarClan and to become a medicine cat, dedicated to healing and serving your Clanmates?" Jayfeather asked.

"Yes!" Shadekit declared.

"From now on, until your mentor determines that you are ready to receive your full name…" Bramblestar's voice faded to replaced by another voice.

"Marigold is good for infected wounds," Jayfeather explained.

"I thought you used cobwebs to stop wounds from bleeding!" Shadepaw exclaimed.

"You do," the blind medicine cat agreed. "But cobwebs cannot heal infection…"

The scenery changed. Shadepaw was sitting by Streampaw's dead body with Jayfeather beside her. "I could've saved her!" she wailed miserably. "If only I was a good medicine cat! It's all my fault!"

"No, Shadecloud," Jayfeather insisted for the hundredth time. "It wasn't your fault. Not even the greatest medicine cat to ever live can complete prevent death. A warrior's life is dangerous and…"

Jayfeather's face changed to Thornclaw's. "Now that Streampaw's dead, I'm kind of scared of death," Shadepaw admitted to her father. "I don't want to ever feel that kind of pain."

"But, Shadepaw," Thornclaw meowed softly. "To fear death is to fear life."

Her surroundings changed once more. "Yes," her blind mentor

admitted. "I spoke to Hollyleaf. She said, "An unknown threat is near. Wind alone has the power to destroy our Clan."

She was snapped out of her memories by Groundsquirrel's voice. "Shadecloud. Shadecloud!" he called more insistently. "Shadecloud, are you okay?"

"Yes, sorry," she sighed.

The warriors worked and finally managed to drag Jayfeather's battered body out from the destroyed elders den.

"Shadecloud," Groundsquirrel whispered softly. "You can rest. The last few days have been rather wearisome."

She stumbled into what was left of the warriors den and settled down, still thinking about her former mentor as she fell asleep.

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Lionstar came into the den, with Woodpelt following, to wake her up. "Shadecloud, where's my brother?" he asked nervously.

The ThunderClan leader looked exhausted and ready to collapse at any moment, but his concern for his brother was also evident on his face.

The regret in Shadecloud's eyes must've said something. His head dropped with sorrow. "So I feared. No, I knew," Lionstar's voice shook. "He gave me one of my lives, but I still couldn't believe he was dead…I must call a Clan meeting!"

Lionstar padded out of the den and scrambled onto the Highledge. "Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey join beneath the Highledge for a Clan meeting!" he yowled.

The clearing was quickly filled with warriors, waiting to hear their new leader's words. "Due to the chaotic events of the past few days, I have not been able to name a new deputy in the ways of our tradition," the golden tom meowed. "But now, I must do so. I

say these words before StarClan, and the spirit of Bramblestar, that they may hear and approve of my choice. Dovewing will be the new deputy."

The gray she-cat looked stunned as the other cats chanted her name and congratulated her. "This Unknown Threat has made a mess of our camp. Some cats must be assigned to restoring the camp. Cherrypelt, you will be in charge of choosing cats for this task and then deciding how to remove the debris from the camp," he announced. "You may choose seven of eight warriors to assist you in the rebuilding. The rest of us will maintain daily patrols."

Cherrypelt nodded importantly. "We have yet another ceremony to perform. Dustpelt, is it your wish to give up the name of a warrior and go to join the elders?" Lionstar asked, looking at the old brown-furred tom.

Dustpelt nodded. "It is," he declared. "I should've joined them long ago."

"The Clan honors you and all the service you have given to us. I call upon StarClan to give you many moons of rest," Lionstar concluded.

"Thank you, Lionstar," Dustpelt dipped his head.

"Lastly, as the majority of you are aware of, our medicine cat, Jayfeather, is dead. Woodpelt is to take over the responsibilities of a full medicine cat," Lionstar glanced anxiously at Shadecloud's brother, whose amber eyes had widened with panic.

"No, I'm not ready to be a full medicine cat!" he insisted, his voice full of desperation. "I wasn't even a medicine cat apprentice for two moons! Shadecloud, please, be a medicine cat again! You know more than I do!"

All eyes turned to Shadecloud. It was tempting. She could regain her old status of a medicine cat and teach her brother as her apprentice. She could find herbs and heal wounds again. She could travel to the Moonpool each half-moon and speak with StarClan.

But she wouldn't hunt. She wouldn't fight in battles and defend her Clanmates. And most importantly, she wouldn't be allowed to have a mate. "No, Woodpelt," she answered. "I'm sorry. But I would miss the duties of a warrior."

"But you could have the duties of a medicine cat!" Woodpelt tried to persuade her. "You could still hunt and fight sometimes!"

"But medicine cats cannot have a mate. And there's a certain cat that I would like to be my mate," she replied, looking nervously over at Groundsquirrel, who was staring at her surprisedly.

"But, Shadecloud…" Woodpelt began.

"Woodpelt, I know you do not feel confident in your capabilities," Lionstar interrupted. "But you should not try to force her to become a medicine cat again. She made her decision to become a warrior, and you made yours to become a medicine cat."

The ThunderClan leader turned and went into his den. The other cats returned to duties, padding over to Dovewing and seeking something to do. Every cat except for Groundsquirrel, who was slowly walking over to her. *Did I say the wrong thing? What if he doesn't feel the same way?*

Shadecloud looked up at him as he approached. He was handsome and strong, and the confident look in his beautiful eyes made her feel confident too. He seemed to have recovered from the badger attack, with only a small, scarcely visible wound on his head. Shadecloud had thought he was still injured worse than that. "You know what you said at that meeting over there?" he asked and she nodded anxiously. "Well, I'd like that too."

Shadecloud felt happiness rise up within her. She stood there, staring at him for a long time. Finally, he spoke again. "We've been standing around for long enough," Groundsquirrel decided. "How about hunting?"

"Of course!" she responded. "Just no badgers this time,

okay?”

Groundsquirrel laughed quietly as they turned and padded out of camp, together.

Epilogue

EPILOGUE

"No, Coldkit, Leafkit!" Shadecloud shouted. "Don't go in the medicine cat den!"

The kits ignored her and continued in the direction of the medicine cat den. Shadecloud sighed and chased after them. "They are certainly troublemakers, but they're also too cute to stay mad at them for long," she muttered.

The thorn bushes at the camp entrance trembled and the kits looked up as Groundsquirrel emerged with prey in his jaws. They forgot about exploring the medicine cat den. "Daddy!" they exclaimed as dashed over to him excitedly.

Groundsquirrel dropped his prey on the fresh-kill pile. "My little warriors!" he purred affectionately. "Are you misbehaving again? Any more incidents like what you did to Dustpelt and Brackenfur in the elders den yesterday?"

"No!" Leafkit and Coldkit declared in unison.

"I would disagree," Shadecloud commented. "They would've destroyed Woodpelt's den if you hadn't shown up."

Groundsquirrel frowned disapprovingly. "You two behave and listen to your mother if you want to be apprentices, okay? If you misbehave too much, Lionstar might delay your apprenticeship. It's a wonder he hasn't already!"

"Yes, Daddy!" they responded cheerfully.

Groundsquirrel didn't seem to believe them, but he didn't say anything else about it. "Why don't you two take Dustpelt and Brackenfur some of that prey, apologize for putting thorns in their moss, and then ask for a story?" he suggested.

“Okay!” the two kits raced over to the fresh-kill pile but as soon as their parents weren’t looking, they scampered away in the direction of the medicine cat den.

“They’re annoying at times, but I love them anyways,” Shadecloud meowed to Groundsquirrel, unaware of Coldkit and Leafkit disappearing into Woodpelt’s den.

“They could afford to learn some obedience though,” Groundsquirrel noted.

“They’ll be apprentices soon enough,” she stated. “And next, they’ll be warriors!”

“Once they’re apprentices, you’ll be out of the nursery and you’ll have to hunt with me again!” Groundsquirrel added.

“You wish!” she exclaimed, playfully cuffing him lightly over the ear.

A sudden screech came from the medicine cat den. “My supplies! NO! STOP IT!!!!”

Shadecloud and Groundsquirrel exchanged a glance. “Oh, no,” Shadecloud muttered, as she walked towards the medicine cat den. “Here we go again…”

Author's Note

It's officially over!

It's been a long journey, but now all 6 books of The Unknown Threat Series are completed! I want to thank all of you for being amazing, loyal fans, putting up with the times when I didn't update for a while(did I mention that I had a research paper, lots of homework, and other books to write?), and supporting all of my stories for the past year! I will probably do another(but also probably shorter) series about Shadecloud's kits. I hope you enjoyed Coldkit and Leafkit's disobedience in the last chapter. I was laughing when I wrote the part where Woodpelt yelled at them. Thanks again, and hope you enjoyed! I have grown much as a writer since I first wrote ShadowClan's Threat and I do believe my newer books are even better than these! If you're interested in reading my latest series that I am currently working on, Warriors: The River's End Series, or the completed Crazystar books which are Crazystar's Battle and its sequel Crazystar's Greatest Challenge, I'd love to have you check those out!

Thanks again and may StarClan light your paths!

~Crazystar